

The Story of Acts

This week we will begin a six-week journey through the book of Acts. Acts is about the work of Jesus continuing through His people. It is about disciples carrying out the great commission after the Lord had ascended to heaven (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-47).

The thesis of the book is Acts 1:8. The will of Jesus was for the gospel to be spread through Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and eventually all the world.

Acts is a story about preaching.

- The church begins with three thousand converts in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41).
 - The church grew to five thousand men (Acts 4:4).
 - Multitudes of people continued to be added to their number (Acts 5:14).
 - Many of the priests were even becoming disciples (Acts 6:7).
 - The word of God was spread throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 9:31; 12:24).
 - Paul took the gospel to places beyond Judea and Samaria (Acts 13-19).
- Due to the evangelistic zeal of the first-century saints, by 63 A.D., the gospel was spread throughout the world (Colossians 1:5-6, 23).

Acts is a story about problems.

- The early Christians faced external problems. Peter and John were arrested by the Jewish leaders (Acts 4). Eventually, all of the apostles were arrested and beaten for preaching about the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 5). Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 7). Saul's persecution forced the church to scatter and leave Jerusalem (Acts 8:1-3). After being converted, a plot is formed by the Jews to kill Saul (Acts 9). James is killed by Herod, and Peter is thrown in prison (Acts 12). Paul is stoned and drug out of Lystra (Acts 14:19).
- The early Christians also faced internal problems. God killed Ananias and Sapphira for being dishonest (Acts 5:1-11). There were accusations of partiality (Acts 6:1). There was a controversy over Gentiles having to be circumcised for salvation (Acts 15:1-35). Paul and Barnabas have a sharp disagreement over John Mark (Acts 15:36-41).

Acts is a story about perseverance.

- Despite their numerous challenges, the early saints refused to lose focus and stop spreading the gospel.
- After appointing seven men to care for the needy widows, God's word continued to spread (Acts 6:2-7).
- Despite being forced from Jerusalem (due to persecution), the disciples continued doing evangelism (Acts 8:4).
- The brethren came together in Jerusalem and discovered the truth regarding Gentile salvation (Acts 15:6).
- Paul and Barnabas didn't allow their disagreement over John Mark to hinder kingdom work (Acts 15:39-41).

Conclusion: The early disciples were serious about the work of Jesus! We have to be just as serious about this work today.